

## Section 3.2 Career Offices

### Introduction

Workforce Solutions has 24 community-based full-time career offices and 10 part-time offices within the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's 13-county service area. Each location provides people with high quality labor market service to help them get a job, keep a job or get a better job.

Workforce Solutions career office staff:

1. Listen to what the customer tells us she wants and needs to get a job, keep a job or get a better job.
2. Provide professional advice when that is helpful and desired by the customer.
3. Help the customer get information, job referrals, career counseling, financial aid, and education or skills training that the customer and staff member have agreed will move her toward her employment goal.

The career office network is the supply side of Workforce Solutions. Career offices supply the skilled workers Gulf Coast businesses need in order to grow and become more competitive.

At the same time, career offices help people find and keep jobs and get the education and training they need to build their careers.

### Career Office Organization

Career office staff works with the public in person, by telephone, by digital communications (email, text, etc.) The franchise model used at Gulf Coast requires every contractor to use our job descriptions for staff who perform required customer service functions. Some jobs require staff in those jobs to be located at every career office location. Other jobs are performed more efficiently from centralized locations. Every job performed by every employee must contribute to the same outcome: Help people get a job, keep a job or get a better job.

- People go to their local career office to talk to workforce professionals about finding a job, keeping a job, or finding a better job. Currently every full-time career office includes staff in the following positions – or staff who perform more than one of these roles: Greeter, Resource Specialist, Recruiter, Employment Counselor, Personal Service Representative, Supervisor, and Manager. Offices with less traffic often combine the duties of several positions into one. Job descriptions for each position can be found in the Systems Resources section of this Request.
- Tracking Units are responsible for tracking customer services and activities for all of the career offices in the region. The Tracking Units, considered an extension of the career offices, are comprised of Program Tracking Specialists Staff members in these positions can easily perform their duties by telephone and/or electronically. All career office

contractors must also employ staff as a Program Tracking Specialists. Bidders may choose to consolidate these staff into one or more central units.

- **Recruiters** within the workforce system work to find skilled workers to fill employers' job openings. Recruiters work with the employers listing jobs; and business consultants, employment counselors, personal service representatives and others in the system. Recruiters use the job matching and query functions in WorkInTexas.com as their primary resource, but will also source talent through contacts with individuals and organizations outside the system. We expect career office contractors to ensure that each full-time office is staffed by or linked to one or more recruiters.
- The **Re-Employment Team** focuses on assisting customers applying for unemployment compensation with a quick return to the workforce. The team members usually serve customers by telephone, email or internet. The team is currently housed in a separate unit at the Westheimer office. The successful bidder will assume operational management of this team.
- The **Regional Navigator Team** is a cross-contractor team that travels to assigned locations in public and private organizations throughout the thirteen counties served by Workforce Solutions. Regional Navigators moderate discussions and deliver effective presentations to the Workforce Solutions system and customers in schools, libraries, and a wide range of community-based organizations. They also support the career offices by sharing resources that can increase access to workforce services and employment opportunities for customers with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, and other assigned groups with recognized barriers.
- The **Regional Quality Assurance Team** is managed by the Board staff and consists of representatives from all Workforce Solutions contractors. The group performs full monitoring reviews of Workforce Solutions operations, and contractors contribute staff from a variety of roles for rotating membership on the team.

Bidders must propose the number of workforce professional staff you believe are necessary in each office, as well as for the regional teams.

The Resource section of this proposal lists the number of staff currently employed in each office, as well as the salary range for current staff.

# Expectations

Career offices help individuals:

## Get a Job

- Make sure I have a good application in WorkInTexas.com to match to appropriate jobs and provide me with at least one good referral to a current, open job for which I am qualified
- Give me professional and helpful advice about applying to a particular employer; how to get skills that I need for the jobs I'm interested in; and, general job search tips (appearance, resumes, interviewing)
- Share relevant and current information on how to look for work in the most effective way, how to transfer my skills to different jobs or industries
- Use interest, education level and/or aptitude tests to inform me or a counselor about possible career choices and necessary training or education paths
- Provide help in mapping out my path to employment, including training for new or higher level skills
- Supply and explain information about the jobs in demand in the Houston area, what skills are needed for those jobs and how to get those skills – including where to get training or education for those skills and how to finance training
- Provide small amounts of financial assistance or connection to community resources to help me look for work: buy work clothes or tools; fix my car or get me short term transportation money so I can get to work

## Keep a Job

- Provide professional, helpful advice on skills I may need to stay on with my employer
- Advise on scholarships for upgrade or other training to keep my job
- Facilitate on-going financial assistance to keep working, such as help with child care expenses

## Get a Better Job

- Provide information about the jobs in demand in the Houston area, what skills are needed for those jobs and how to get those skills
- Share practical advice on how to get the skills I need for a better job, where to look for a better job, how to apply for a better job

- Use interest, education level and/or aptitude tests to inform me or a counselor about possible career choices and necessary training or education paths
- Advise on scholarships and related financial assistance to get the skills I need for a promotion or to take a better job with a different employer.

## Career Offices

Currently Workforce Solutions has 24 full-time career offices and 10 part-time offices located throughout the region.

- Career offices
  - Place individuals in jobs listed with Workforce Solutions by employers;
  - Assist customers by providing professional, helpful advice on job search topics as well as careers;
  - Offer career planning, job search and training advice as well as counseling support;
  - Help residents build their careers by providing career assessment and testing, career information, and access to financial aid for education and family support; and,
  - Work with eligible youth in their service regions.
- Full-time offices are open at least Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in locations identified as Workforce Solutions career offices
- Part-time offices are locations associated with another organization and usually career office staff are on-site only during specific hours and specific days of the week. Currently our part-time locations include:
  - Covenant House (Houston)
  - Cuney Homes (Houston)
  - Houston Central Library (Houston)
  - Metropolitan Multi-Service Center (Houston)
  - Community HUB (Palacios)
  - Ring Neighborhood Library (Houston)
  - Star of Hope Men's Development Center (Houston)
  - Star of Hope Women and Family Shelter (Houston)
  - Salvation Army – Harbor Light (Houston)
  - Winnie (Winnie)
- Currently 26 Recruiters stationed mostly in groups use WorkInTexas to identify candidates, screen, and refer them to area employers that list job openings. These staff serve as a link between a business with the opening and career office personnel who help people who come to us looking for work.

- Career office counselors may disperse up to \$200 a year in financial aid to a customer who needs it to return to work quickly. This financial aid is limited by category to such things as tools, uniforms, documents or test fees.

Career office staff serve anyone who wants to get a job, keep a job or get a better job and any employer who is interested in hiring. They provide the supply to Gulf Coast businesses' demand for capable workers. People looking for work include those who are employed as well as those who are not; those who are looking for education credentials or skill upgrades; and those who need significant levels of service and support to go or return to work.

Career office staff provides service in person at each local career office, over the telephone through a region-wide toll-free number, and on the internet. More than 600 career office staff served more than 380,000 individuals last year.

- Career office contractors provide onsite access to anyone looking for work or career information. This means that career office staff will provide
  - ✓ Basic Service to match current job openings with qualified people, help people look for and prepare for work, and understand local labor markets
  - ✓ Expanded Service to provide career advice, help customers learn how to look for work, and help them manage an array of services toward an employment goal
  - ✓ Financial aid access for scholarships and family and work support

Workforce Solutions Issuances and Standards & Guidelines contain the operations specifications for career offices. Contractors are required to conduct their operations in accordance with those standards.

## Successful Bidders

We expect successful bidders for the career office network to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and experience managing a high volume customer service business with a diverse customer base
- Have knowledge and experience in placing applicants into jobs
- Work successfully with employers to fill their current job openings
- Understand and know how to provide career assessment and counseling
- Advise customers on education and training
- Provide high quality, customer-oriented service
- Keep accurate, up-to-date, complete records of the services and financial aid you provide your customers.
- Demonstrate initiative and inclination to develop virtual service strategies that employ technology to serve customers. Examples might include:
  - the use of chat and social media platforms;

- web conference interviews with employers and virtual hiring events and job fairs;
- virtual orientations; and
- connect customers to online job readiness seminars and tools.
- Have the capability to staff part-time locations and staff new locations as they may be added.
- Have the knowledge and ability to recruit and serve eligible youth
- Provide enough facilitators and navigators to staff the regional team that travels to various locations, career offices, schools, and other sites to deliver Workforce Solutions seminars and facilitate service for customers.
- Solicit and process customer feedback on service and provide results to the system

## Performance and Production

Career offices are primarily responsible for achieving annual targets for the Board performance measures relating to an educated workforce and higher incomes: placing individuals in employment that they can retain and which increases their incomes and helping them achieve higher levels of education and training, including certifications necessary to take good jobs.

Production requirements include reaching a variety of targets for specific projects or groups of customers related to going to work, staying in work, increasing incomes, and obtaining education/training certifications.

Performance measures and expected production targets are shown in the Resources section of this Request.

## Combinations

Organizations or individuals that bid to operate Career Offices may not bid to operate Employer Service.

Bidders may submit a proposal to operate one or more career offices. The Resources part of this request lists current offices. Bidders may proposal new locations.

## How to Submit a Proposal

Submit your proposal in the following order:

- 1.0 Proposal Cover Sheet
- 2.0 Information about your organization
- 3.0 Information about your bid
- 4.0 Budget and staffing summary
- 5.0 Assurances and certifications
- 6.0 Copy of organization's most recent audit and audited financial statements

## Information About Your Organization

Provide the following information for us in a narrative that is no more than 12 pages:

1. A description of the organizational structure and why it is structured this way. Is the organization for profit or non-profit? Explain how this organizational arrangement supports the Workforce Solutions business model. (no more than 2 pages)
2. An organization chart that shows graphically how your organization operates. (no more than 1 page)
3. Information about any governing boards such as a board of directors or advisory boards. Provide the names and terms of Board members. Include information about affiliated organizations such as subsidiaries or parent companies, and specifically describe relationships. (no more than 2 pages)
4. A list of the key staff for your organization. Identify the principals and leadership and describe their responsibilities, experience and length of service with your organization. Which principals, if any, would be assigned to work on Workforce Solutions' contract? Who controls the management of your organization? (no more than 2 pages)
5. A description of your organization's mission, vision, and values, if you have them. Describe who developed them and how they were developed. How does your organization communicate the vision, mission and core values? How are they expressed in the organization? (no more than 2 pages)
6. A description of how your organization's mission supports that of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. Describe how you will ensure that your organization's mission, vision and values will not supplant or confuse the Workforce Board's mission in operation of the project. (no more than 1 page)
7. A description of your financial stability and any comments you wish to make about your credit rating, your payment policies, and any recognition you may have received from accrediting or other bodies for organization or financial excellence. Has your organization experienced any financial difficulty in the past five years? (no more than 1 page)
8. Include references from at least three organizations that have contracted with your organization to provide services similar to those proposed (name of organization, contact person, telephone/email, amount of contract, service provided).

## Information About Your Proposal

Provide the following information for us in a narrative that is no more than 24 pages:

1. Describe your organization's experience in helping people who are looking for employment or seeking assistance to go to school or training. Include your experience in the following areas: (no more than 4 pages)
  - a. Working with employers and helping people prepare for employment opportunities

- b. Assessment and intake. Please list the specific assessments you have used in the past and outline your process for assessment and testing.
  - c. Goal-setting and career planning.
  - d. Performance goals and applicable outcomes related to your programs. We are particularly interested in educational outcomes (i.e. enrollment, credential attainment and educational gains) as well as workforce outcomes (employment, retention, and wage gains).
- 2. Explain how you will ensure your office operations are integrated with the following to provide seamless service to customers: (no more than 4 pages)
  - a. Board staff
  - b. Employer Service
  - c. Financial Aid Support Office
  - d. Financial Aid Payment Office
  - e. Adult Education providers
  - f. Vocational Rehabilitation staff
- 3. Explain how you will use emerging technologies to improve the quality and efficiency of services to customers. (no more than 1 page)
- 4. Define exceptional customer service. (no more than 1 page)
- 5. Explain how you will obtain and use feedback from customers to improve the delivery of service in your offices. How will you ensure consistency across all of your offices? (no more than 1 page)
- 6. Explain your organization's plan to identify and develop current employees for leadership positions. (no more than 1 page)
- 7. Describe the measures your organization will take to attract and retain high producing employees. How do you hold underperforming staff accountable. (no more than 1 page)
- 8. Outside of Board supported training, describe your approach to training and onboarding new staff and supporting staff with ongoing training and development. (no more than 1 page)
- 9. What is your approach for ensuring your offices are following guidance established by the board and meeting performance objectives? How will you know? (no more than 1 page)
- 10. Describe how your offices will work effectively with community partners. List community partners with which you currently have a relationship. Provide an example of how working with community partners has benefitted your customers. (no more than 1 page)



11. Describe how your offices will recruit and provide meaningful service to customers who are eligible for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act youth dollars. (no more than 3 pages)
12. You are visited by a customer who enters the office for the first time and says she needs to go to work right now and will take any type of immediate employment. This customer also conveys that she has little work experience and has no idea about what she wants to do with her future. Please describe the steps you would use to assist this customer. (no more than 1 pages)
13. You are visited by a customer who has an established work history as an engineer, but now wants to do different work – although he is unsure in what field. Describe the steps you would use in working with this customer. (no more than 1 pages)
14. A young adult has been working as a construction laborer. She tells your employment counselor that she would like to go back to school but has a family to support. She wants to be a social worker. How can we help? (no more than 1 page)
15. What steps will you take to ensure that any facilities where customers are served, provide physical accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Texas Accessibility Survey (TAS) guidelines?
16. How will ensure that your services are delivered in a way that makes them equally accessible to individuals with all types of disabilities?

## **Budget and Staffing**

Use the Budget and staffing forms provided for the Career Office bidders and provide a narrative back-up which describes in detail your budget line items. Read the General Budget Requirements page in the Resources section before preparing a budget. Also provide us the following:

1. The Career Office budget has three parts: a budget for each location a bidder proposes to operate, a budget for central management/administration, and a summary budget for the entire proposal.
  - Complete a budget, with a narrative back-up for each line item in the budget, for each location your organization wants to operate.

Be sure that each career office location budget contains only costs for those activities and persons physically located at the site and excludes management & general/central administration costs.

If you will use funds from this proposal to pay for salaries of personnel not listed in the tables, list those positions in a separate summary, give the name of the

current occupant of the position (if filled), and the amount of the salary you will charge to this proposal.

- Complete a management & general/central administration budget, with narrative back-up for each line item in the budget, for your organization's management & general expenses.

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs of any type, include the entire amount in the management & general/central administration budget.

Do not break out from management & general that portion of costs you expect to allocate to "administration" cost categories of federal or state funds.

- Complete a summary budget for the entire proposal. There is no need to provide narrative-back up for line items at this level.

2. In the Resources section of this request, there is information about the following:

- The current career office lease obligations will transfer to the organization awarded a contract to operate the office – Costs associated with each lease are in Resources IV.3. Career office lease and communication information
- The current communications costs are listed with lease information.
- The number of computers at each career office is provided for your information. You may assume that each office has a sufficient number of computers for staff and customer use. Approximately 25% of the computers are refreshed each year.
- Offices are fully furnished. The furniture will remain in the office regardless of the organization awarded a contract to operate the office.

Workforce Solutions franchise requirements specify that career offices will staff nine required positions. Current staffing by position and location is in *Resources IV.5. Career Office Staffing by Location and Position*. Each operator must fill the required positions. You should propose the lowest staffing levels adequate to meet the Boards' performance expectations.

## **Assurances and Certifications**

Use the forms provided in this request. Be sure to include all required forms (certifications for debarment, lobbying, and drug-free workplace; Texas franchise tax; Texas state assessments; the general assurances and certifications; and the conflict of interest questionnaire), and be sure that all are properly signed by an authorized representative of your organization.

## **Audit and Financial Statements**

Attach a copy of your organization's most recent organization audit as well as audited financial statements.